IRISH LAND (PROVISION FOR SAILORS AND SOLDIERS) BILL, 1919.

ESTIMATE

OF

PROBABLE EXPENDITURE.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

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ESTIMATE OF PROBABLE EXPENDITURE

UNDER THE

IRISH LAND (PROVISION FOR SAILORS AND SOLDIERS) BILL.

The Bill contemplates the provision of holdings for ex-service men by the Land Commission under the Irish Land Purchase Acts, and the provision of cottages with small plots by the Local Government Board under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts.

The transactions of the Land Commission will involve the acquisition of land so far as suitable land already acquired or in process of acquisition under the Land Purchase Acts is not available, the management and letting of the land pending the sale, the conversion of the land into holdings with suitable equipment, and the re-sale of such holdings to ex-service men.

It is proposed by the Bill that the moneys required for the purpose of these transactions should be provided in the same way as the money required for the purchase and re-settlement of congested estates under the Land Purchase Acts, that is to say, that the purchase money should be provided out of the Land Purchase Fund and any deficiency on re-sales should be paid out of money provided by Parliament, that the expenses of improvement and of management pending re-sale should be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament, and that any profits on such management should be repaid to the Exchequer.

The amount of the total expenditure likely to be incurred in these transactions will depend upon the amount of suitable land available, the price at which the land can be acquired, the number of ex-service men applying and qualified for the purchase of holdings, the cost of equipping the lands as holdings with houses, roads, &c., and the prices on re-sales. Having regard to the uncertainty of all these factors, it is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy the gross expenditure or the deficiency likely to arise on the transactions; but it is anticipated that on the whole there may be an average deficiency of about £375 per holding.

It is proposed that the expenses incurred by the Local Government Board in providing cottages and plots shall be defrayed out of money provided by Parliament, and that the receipts of the Board shall be paid into the Exchequer. For the reasons already stated, it is not possible to give an accurate estimate of the gross expenditure or deficiency likely to be incurred in these transactions, but it is anticipated that the average capital cost per cottage and plot will amount, approximately, to £600, and that a considerable portion of this sum may be recouped on the ultimate disposal of the cottage when no longer required for an ex-service man. Cottages and plots will be let to ex-service men at rents corresponding to those paid by agricultural labourers for similar cottages and plots under the Labourers Acts, and it is anticipated that the average annual deficiency per cottage and plot will amount to some £33 10*s*.

The Bill also empowers the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland to promote co-operation in connection with holdings and cottages provided under the Bill, and proposes that the expenses incurred by the Department shall be defrayed out of money provided by Parliament to such extent as may be sanctioned by the Treasury. It is estimated that the expenditure under this head will not amount to more than £1,500 for the first year.

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